

Memorandum

To: Chair and Commissioners

Date: September 20, 2002

From: Diane C. Eidam

File No:
Reference Number 2.2c.(2)
Action

Ref: **Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Improvements Project (Los Angeles County) - Future Consideration of Funding to Build a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System Along Wilshire Boulevard (Notice of Determination) (TCRP #37.1) Resolution E-02-44**

Issue:

Should the Commission adopt the attached resolution to approve future consideration of funding to build a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system operating in the curb lane along the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard from Western Avenue to the City of Santa Monica in Los Angeles County?

Recommendation:

Commission staff recommends that the Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-02-44. As a responsible agency, the Commission must approve this Resolution prior to allocating funds for capital purposes on the proposed BRT project.

Background:

This resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act has been completed:

- Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor, Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project – Build BRT system along Wilshire Boulevard between Western Avenue and Ocean Boulevard, traversing City of Los Angeles, City of Beverly Hills, Los Angeles County, and the City of Santa Monica.

The Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is a bus rapid transit system operating in the curb lane along north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard from Western Avenue to the City of Santa Monica. The Wilshire BRT is intended to provide higher capacity transit service to the Westside area that would improve upon the existing Metro Rapid Bus service through such features as new higher capacity buses, repair of the curb lane in Wilshire Center, Park Mile and Miracle Mile; enhanced station areas, parking facilities in two locations; an enlarged Downtown bus storage maintenance facility; and a bus only lane (curb lane) in the peak period (if supported by the affected jurisdictions).

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The curb lane reconstruction and peak period bus lane operation portion of the project will have the following temporary significant effects on the environment that cannot be fully mitigated:

- Freeway Impacts: Peak period bus lane would divert traffic from Wilshire Boulevard to Santa Monica Freeway. There was no feasible mitigation available for automobile trips diverted to the freeway.
- Traffic: Significant traffic at two intersections (Wilshire/Westwood and Wilshire/LaCienega) after mitigation. Significant traffic generated by construction workers and trucks hauling excavated materials or construction supplies would reduce the capacity of the existing street causing traffic detours and delays for a period of three to four weeks in Wilshire Center, Park Mile and Miracle Mile. To mitigate this LACMTA would assist the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to implement the Advanced Traffic Control System (ATCS). LACMTA with the City of Beverly Hills will identify traffic operation improvements to mitigate impacts of any traffic diversions, recalibrate signal timing to reduce delays, and monitor traffic conditions and prepare mitigation programs for each impacted neighborhood.
- Air Quality--Carbon Monoxide Hot Spots: Closure of travel lanes during construction would likely divert traffic to adjacent streets where CO concentrates currently exceed state standards. There is no feasible mitigation available for diverted traffic.

The current estimate for the project is \$235,400,000, of which \$228,900,000 (\$4,700,000 committed and \$224,200,000 proposed) in funding will be provided through the Governor's Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP), Project #37.1. The remaining \$7,500,000 will come from other federal and state funding sources. A minor amendment was received in April 2002, which updated the project schedule for Phase 1 and the overall financial plan.

The MTA Board has approved the Final Supplemental EIS/EIR and has filed a Notice of Determination for this project. The Commission's approval and the resulting filing of the attached Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research will satisfy the environmental requirements for this stage of the project planning process.

Attachment

Trosnow/tcrp/nod/BI TCRP Project 37.1-final.DOC/9/20/02

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding Los Angeles Mid-City Transit Improvements Project (Los Angeles County)

Resolution E-02-44

- 1.1 WHEREAS**, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has completed a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement(EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the CEQA Guidelines, and the California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations for the following project:
- Los Angeles Mid-City Transit Improvements
- 1.2 WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Supplemental EIS/EIR; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS**, the curb lane reconstruction and peak period bus lane operation portions of the project will have the following significant environmental effects that cannot be fully mitigated: automobile trips diverted to the freeway will add significant traffic, two intersections will be significantly impacted; traffic generated by construction workers and trucks, and poor air quality due to traffic converted to adjacent streets creating carbon monoxide hot spots.
- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby approve the above-referenced project for future consideration of funding.